

Halo: Heroes of ONineteen

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Summary: A human outpost is attacked by a Covenant assault force. Humans versus Covenant in a tale of heroics on both sides and their fate at the hands of a foreign force.

Halo: Heroes of ONineteen

Halo: The Untold Story

Covenant cruiser Leviathan lumbered through space at 1k units towards the rendezvous location- a point outside of regular space; a wormhole to the lay person. Ship Master Oli 'Ulamee glared at the point via view screen. No bigger than 1/10 of a unit in diameter, it would require precision timing on 'Ulamee's part in order not to hit it. Instead he would have to slide across it, activating the warp interface on the underside of the hull. Besides that, all he could speak for in terms of his crew was the team of 500 or so engineers/technicians and about 50-score battle-ready Grunts and Elites. The rest of his crew had been assumed under the command of Field Master Ilo 'Palamee, who had ordered a drop on the human outpost 'Ulamee was now fleeing. 'Palamee was undoubtedly winning the fight, but to be safe, 'Ulamee had chosen to obey safety protocol, standard for Ship Masters, and flee. With a crew short of about 1000, and 'those damned barbarians' on their tails, 'Ulamee began to wonder just how far he would even get.

Captain James "Jimmy" O'Brien, 1st Class, command of Naval Outpost 019, looked through his captain's monocular at the fleeing Covenant cruiser. Deciding that he would contemplate the Covenant's obscure strategy later, he instead put the Covenant breach assault at first priority. Crunching numbers in mere seconds, Captain O'Brien figured he had about 120 marines with which to fend off this new assault. It had been bad enough being stirred out of a dream about his wife by the blaring alarm and red lights, but the fact that there was actually a Covenant assault team on their doorstep (usually the alarm went off for no reason, a glitch he would have to have fixed sooner or later) trying to get in was more than the captain felt he could

handle at 0200 hours. So the captain downed a stim pack with some water, slid on his body armor, and followed 3 other marines down to the armory. There he exchanged his captain's pistol for a rocket launcher and his assault weapon for a shotgun. Being the captain gives one all sorts of little perks.

Field Master Uli 'Palamee crouched with his command of Elites behind a support pillar on the human fortification designated as O-nineteen. 'Palamee was not a conniving coward like Excellency Ship Master 'Ulamée. No, 'Palamee was sure of that. Rather, he thought of himself as a great heroic military leader, due to his rather transcendent nature, whose name would be sung throughout the ages by all of his race to come after him.

It was with these thoughts in mind that 'Palamee ordered the assault on O-nineteen. It was with these thoughts that 'Palamee deactivated his stealth generator and roared against the oncoming projectile fire, brandished his plasma rifle before him, and fired as he threw a plasma grenade with his other hand. It was also with these thoughts in mind as a rocket, as if from no where in particular, zoomed towards 'Palamee's helmet, impacted its side, and detonated 'Palamee's head before the tremendous roar had even left his mouth.

Captain O'Brien took his eye away from the rocket launcher's scope, wiped sweat from his brow, and glanced down at the pad and the neat little scorch mark that was once a gold-armored Elite.

"Now that's shootin'! I'll be damned if any one'a you boys can make a shot like that!"

"Sir, no SIR!" shouted the surrounding marines in unison. O'Brien laughed as he slung the launcher over his shoulder, feeling rather restless and risky, and pulled the shotgun up to his shoulder, ordered a counter-attack, and charged down the stairway to the launch pad where the enemy was being held. Fortunately for the captain and his command of marines, there were only two massive support beams on the closed pad, which extended up to the ceiling some 2000 meters upward, and there were no launch boats or fighters for the aliens to hide behind. Also, unbeknownst to O'Brien, he had only just blown up the Covenant assault team's commanding Elite, which left the remaining 3-score of Covenant warriors at temporary disarray.

Ali 'Mutamee caught in the corner of his beam rifle's scope the montage of blood and gore flying from the late Field Master 'Palamee's body. A tide of thoughts passed through 'Mutamee's head—"What just happened? Am I in charge now that 'Palamee's dead? I believe I am, am I? Yes. Protocol and higher wisdom dictates so. Now, how to get off this rock—"and it took approximately .01 units for 'Mutamee to figure out that he was now in charge of the compliment of now 3-score Covenant soldiers.

"Form on me," 'Mutamee yelled, his voice battling the echoing roars of human and Covenant fire, "we'll pull out! Someone contact the cruiser for extraction."

"We tried; the Leviathan has already jumped back to High Charity via the rendezvous point," said the battalion's comm. specialist, "There's no hope of us getting off now; we're d-doomed!"

"No we're not, not yet at least." 'Mutamee saw the peril of this situation clearer now than ever. The cruiser Leviathan had left with its compliment of 1000 battle-ready warriors. \_"We need a way off of here and quick. Perhaps if we borrowed a human transport. This is clearly a landing bay, but there are no human vessels. Strangeâ€|"\_ With his beam rifle still on the high zoom setting, 'Mutamee searched for another exit out of the spacious hangar. He found his exit on the far end of the bay, at the bottom of a scaffold structure connecting the platform to the higher balcony where the human soldiers were gathered, making their stand. To take that balcony, simply using small arms, would require more troops than he had. But there were two Hunter squads huddling in defensive positions behind the two columns that could take out the humans with one or two shots.

'Mutamee signaled the first team of Hunters in, his personal squad of Elites providing covering fire with their beam rifles and carbines. The Hunters advanced, deflecting projectile fire with their shields and charging their fuel rod guns for the crucial shot. They secured a position some 20 meters in before the balcony, aimed upward, and fired their guns. At least, they would have, had they not been blown up by miraculously accurate rockets at the last moment.

"Once again, sir, nice shooting, sir!" yelled a marine from Captain O'Brien's squad, "That Hunter never knew what hit him, sir!"

"I 'preciate your enthusiasm, soldier, but we've got more worries. I'm out of launcher ammo, an' look, there, behind the eastern pillar: two more Hunters. We'll need a true miracle to get out of this one, men," said O'Brien, now addressing the men gathered around him, "many of this station's garrison have bought the farm already fighting Covenant. Many more of us will in these next few moments. I don't know what the Covenant's intentions here are, but I do know one thing: they're not welcome here, and we will fight for our base. We've put in too much time here to let this place go to Covie hands. Understood, Marines?"

"Understood, SIR!" replied the marines in unison. There were less than 40 marines left on the balcony, and they knew this would be a last stand. They took O'Brien's words to heart and found new vigor, new will to fight in them.

The advantage to their dismally small numbers was that they could all have some cover on this otherwise open protrusion, and now stood a fairly good chance against the 30 or so Covenant soldiers left, including the Hunters. In fact, the only threats to the marines, given their excellent cover, were incendiary devices, like grenades, or a couple shots from a Hunter's fuel rod gun.

Despite their tactical advantage, O'Brien knew he'd need a plan to eliminate the rest of the Covenant before the siege wore the marines out. Even though he and his remaining compliment of marines were veritably stranded on the raised platform, they did have the height advantage. O'Brien and his marines would fire scattered, deceptively inaccurate volleys of fire to draw the Covenant in close to the balcony. Then the marines would drop grenades and fire their shotguns veritably on the heads of the remaining Covenant foot soldiers. The Hunters were a different matter, however. They could take out the balcony from further away, and would require sniper rifles or rockets to take them out, just what the marines didn't have. The best they could muster in terms of long-range weapons were their battle rifles,

and even then the chances of taking out the Hunters before being reduced to plasma scorches on the walls of the hangar were slim. O'Brien needed a miracle, and fast.

Oli 'Ulamee stood nervously at the helm of the Covenant cruiser Leviathan, awaiting contact from High Charity and further orders. 'Ulamee had fled out of fear; pure, unadulterated fear, something Elites of his rank and status were not allowed to feel. 'Ulamee now feared judgment by the Prophets. Either way, 'Ulamee's fate would not be pretty. Should he wait for contact and proceed on to High Charity, his fate would be his body incinerated and his head preserved on a pedestal in the Hall of the Prophets for all to see. Should he flee away from High Charity and the fate that awaited him there, he would be doomed to starvation or a worse fate alone in space.

"Put your head on straight, 'Ulamee," he thought to himself, "there's a way out of this, you just don't know it yet. You're smarter than your peers, you'll figure something out." Just what he would figure out was lost to him at the moment, so his mind continued projecting his fears to himself as he stood alone on the bridge of the ship.

At last, a plan came to him. It sounded crazy in his head, but he was doomed to death as it was, so, logically, anything he did until then would have no effect, except perhaps prolong his suffering before passing onto Higher Consciousness.

'Ulamee's plan was this: he would turn the vessel around and head back to the human outpost. Utilizing the cruiser's weapons systems, the ship's complement of engineers and pilots would target the outpost. After the human structure was blasted into oblivion, 'Ulamee would take the Leviathan back to High Charity and beg his forgiveness, under the pretenses that the boarding force sent onto the station had failed, and that he had single-handedly eliminated all the humans and their outpost. It perhaps was just crazy enough to work.

'Mutamee hid with his warriors behind a pillar. The first team of Hunters had been eliminated, and the second was crouched behind the next pillar over. The two forces were at a stalemate, and to continue fighting would be wasting ammunition. The humans had stopped firing as well. 'Mutamee and his remaining forces would wait the humans out, letting them tire themselves out, and then strike at the humans' raised position on the balcony with their grenades and the last team of Hunters, forcing the humans out of their hidey-holes. 'Mutamee told himself that the battle would not last more than a few more hours. Finding renewed confidence in this, he closed his eyes and hummed a battle-hymn to himself.

As his soldiers fell asleep around him, one by one, Captain O'Brien reflected on his career. He remembered the day he was promoted to Captain, 1st Class, and how wonderful that felt. Now it felt like it was all being stripped from him; the glory, the pride, the honor, everything. He figured he would not live to see the end of this fight, and this depressed him further. Never before, in his entire military career, had O'Brien felt this sorry for himself. He had once fought beside the SPARTANS, great warriors engineered for combat. He had always wished to be like one of them; tall, strong, fearless. Now he would die, afraid and alone, crouched behind the balcony rail,

never again to see the face of his wife.

"Godammit, snap out of it," O'Brien told himself, "I'm here now, that's all there is to it. I'm here for a reason, and if that reason is to die fighting Covenant bastards, then so be it, I'll die honorably. Maybe no one will remember me. So what? Maybe, after I'm dead, the marines will still lose the station to the Covenant. So what? What does it matter, anyway?... I've gotta fight this one out. 'Think: if there's anyone at that moment, right there, who can carry out your duty better than you can, kindly tell him to relieve you of your duty. Chances for that are usually about 1 in 100, so suck it up and do your best, 'cause no one else can do what you might do if you try'. That's what my old chief said. Let's see if what he said was true." O'Brien found himself, too, with these last thoughts, falling into sleep. "Gotta find a way to get those damned Huntersâ€¦" With that, O'Brien fell into the most peaceful sleep he had ever had in his life.

Ulamée approached Human Outpost O-nineteen almost cautiously. He did not know whether the insertion force had survived. To destroy them with the station would be Blood Error, punishable by death, but what way was there of finding out or not? Of course, he could always try the insertion force's comm. line, but what were the chances of it still being online? Ulamée did not know what to do, and creating 'what if' scenarios only furthered his panic. After moments of swallowing his fears and doubts, the Ship Master decided to initiate the fire sequence.

"Bridge to weapons control. Are the firing tubes ready toâ€¦ fire?" Ulamée asked via the ship's audio transfer relays.

"Yes, Ship Master" came the squeaky, insectoid voice of an engineer from the weapons control room, "The plasma torpedoes are locked and ready to fire."

"Good, good. Fire on my order."

"As your Excellency commands."

Ulamée, though he had made up his mind, still had his doubts. "What if there are remaining insertion force members on that outpost?" Ulamée thought to himself, "I can't destroy that station if there are fellow Covenant remaining on the target. I could be killed! sigh Perhaps if I tried contacting Palamée. Yes, that's what I'll do. Palamée will understand. He'll have to, I'm higher command than he is!"

Ulamée sent a call over the outboard comm. system to Palamée. Ulamée reached the comm. device, but received no reply. Again, Ulamée sent the call, this time louder than the first.

Mutamée was startled out of a dream about his home world by a loud, familiar beeping. He was fully awake and battle ready when the beeping stopped. Mutamée sat vigilantly waiting for the noise again. It came, louder this time. Mutamée recognized the beeping as the noise the ship-to-ground comm. device made when a call is sent from a cruiser to a ground force. Mutamée wanted more than anything than to answer that call, but the comm. device was held last by Field Master Palamée, whose cold, dead body lay some 20 units beyond the column behind which Mutamée hid. It was a loud beeping noise; Mutamée

expected the humans must have heard it too. The beeping stopped, followed by an eerie silence like the all-too-quiet calm before a storm.

"What the \_hell\_ is that incessant beeping!" whispered Captain O'Brien after the second alarm clock-reminiscent noise, "The threat alarm in my room ain't as loud as thatâ€¦ whatever it is. Where's it coming from, sentry?"

"Not sure, sir," said the non-com from behind a pair of over-sized military-grade binoculars, "Seems to be coming from somewhere in the open, from one of their dead."

"Hmm, a communicator, perhaps." said O'Brien, "Someone's trying to get a hold of them. Let's see if one of them goes to answer it."

"Yes, sir" said the marine, switching his binoculars for the scope on his battle rifle, "wait and seeâ€¦"

'Ulamée waited a moment longer after the second call went out from the \_Leviathan\_. There was no reply from the insertion force. 'Ulamée sighed to himself, almost feeling responsible in some way for the deaths of those warriors. With a sense of loss and regret, and feeling he had nothing left to lose, 'Ulamée sent the call a third time.

'Mutamée heard the third call, even louder than the others. Higher Law dictates that he ought to answer the call, but common sense dictated that he preserve his life. \_"What does the higher law care about my life?"\_ thought 'Mutamée to himself defiantly, \_"I shouldn't have to risk myself for some stupid code. But that call could be our way out of here. I have to answer that call."\_ 'Mutamée waited until the beeping had finished, then activated his stealth generator and crept from behind the pillar, veritably crawling towards the corpse of the late 'Palamée.

"There's something out there, sir!" whispered the marine sentry audibly, "I can see it on my motion tracker."

"Just wait for it to reveal itself" said O'Brien patiently, his mind still on the beeping noise, "No use wasting ammo over somethin' you can't see."

"S-sir, yes sir!" stuttered the marine anxiously, not knowing what was out there, only that it was Covenant and potentially dangerous.

'Mutamée reached the body without being seen by the humans, miraculously enough. Whether he had been spotted or not was a different matter. The body was close enough to the pillar that he could escape back to the sanctity of cover without, pray to the Prophets, being hit by human fire. He was about to pick up the comm. device when the bark of a human weapon broke the uneasy silence. 'Mutamée got a grip on the comm. device, ripped it free of its casing on 'Palamée's waist-armor, and ran back behind the pillar. His heart threatening to break free of his chest with its beating, 'Mutamée fumbled with the device until he found the 'return call' key, touched it, and waited for a response while his compliment of Elites stirred silently around him.

'Ulamee was about to issue the fire command when the call response echoed through the cruiser's command bridge. Someone had responded to that third call. Stunned, 'Ulamee fumbled around the control panel to send the return call button, not realizing he had issued the fire command accidentally.

'Mutamee waited anxiously for the return call from the \_Leviathan\_. He got it: "'Mutamee, this is Ship Master 'Ulamee. Pray some final words for yourself and your companions. You have been sacrificed for the greater good of the Covenant... I-I... I'm sorry, 'Mutamee."

The plasma torpedoes hit the Human Outpost O-Nineteen with sudden silence; the vacuum of space siphoned away the noise. A fragment from the blast appeared on the \_Leviathan's\_ viewscreen as 'Ulamee viewed the cataclysmic explosion from space. It was a Human battle-helmet. 'Ulamee zoomed in on the piece of Human-garb. There was a name-tag on the front; it read \_O'Brien, Captain, 1st Class\_.

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